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## MY RECOLLECTIONS OF CIVIL WAR DAYS

MRS. LATHROP E. SMITH

I have been requested to relate my recollections of some of the events of the days of the Civil War and am glad to comply with this request. My story is not like the one you will find in the histories of the war written by real historians but is a record of events, trivial perhaps to others, but of great interest to a schoolgirl of those days and written from a schoolgirl's point of view.

The first presidential campaign in which I had any interest, really the first one I remember, was that of 1856 when the new Republican party nominated John C. Frémont as their candidate. There was great enthusiasm all through the North and Republican clubs were organized in every city, village, and hamlet. In our neighborhood of Windsor, twelve miles north of Madison, such a club was organized in which my brother, Clement E. Warner and his friend, Herbert A. Lewis (who afterward became my husband) took great interest. Herbert was secretary of the club, and although the boys were not yet twenty-one, they attended every meeting of the club and were quite as much concerned about its success as if they had been old enough to vote. I heard many of their discussions in our home and was very anxious to have Frémont elected president. A great many political meetings were held and we all sang songs and hurraed for Frémont. One song began:

“A mighty army march we forth  
With Frémont in the van,”

and the chorus ended with:

“Our watchword Jessie and the right  
There's no such thing as fail.”

Jessie was the daughter of Senator Benton of Missouri and had eloped with Frémont and become his wife. A large

Frémont ratification meeting was held in Madison at which Carl Schurz and William H. Seward were the orators. Of course such a meeting was attended by all the country round about. A procession of wagons over three miles long was formed decorated with national flags and banners of every description. The plaudits of the people were given to the delegation from the northeastern section of the country, comprising the towns of Sun Prairie, Bristol, and Windsor. Our wagon on this occasion, like many of the others, was a lumber wagon drawn by a four-horse team and equipped with a hay-rack on which were arranged two rows of seats all around so as to accommodate thirty or forty men, women, and children. The flag which we carried was the first flag I can remember. No flags were to be bought in those days, and this one was made for the occasion by hand, with painstaking care, by Aunt Sarah Haswell, from cloth purchased at the store in Madison.

Those who lived in our neighborhood will always remember with great interest the winter of 1858-59. A teachers' institute was held in the red schoolhouse every two weeks throughout the winter and was attended by the older scholars and the teachers in the near-by schools. Otis Remick taught in our district, E. G. Miller at Token Creek, Herbert Lewis in the Clements neighborhood, Samuel Powell in Sun Prairie, Willard Chandler in the Carpenter neighborhood, and Clement Warner in the Hundred Mile Grove. Mr. Remick invited many of the Madison educators to come out and address the meetings and during the winter we listened to Superintendent Craig, Professor Jewell, Chancellor Barnard, Professor Pickard, and others and had a very interesting time. Most of these teachers were University students and afterward served in the Civil War—Remick, Miller, and Powell from the beginning to the end.

Another flag I well remember was made for Rockford Seminary soon after Fort Sumter was fired upon and used during the war and for many years afterward. The reason

I remember this flag was that Marie Miner and I were appointed by Miss Anna P. Sill, the principal, a committee to purchase the cloth of red, white, and blue of which the flag was made. Marie Miner was afterward Mrs. C. H. Richards, our pastor's wife in Madison for over twenty years. I was rooming with Sophie Smith (now Mrs. Willet Main) in the Seminary at that time and soon after the first call for troops we received letters, she from her brother Henry and I from Otis Remick, a friend, who were students in the University of Wisconsin, telling us that they and several others whom we knew had enlisted in Company K of Madison—Captain Lucius Fairchild, the First Wisconsin Infantry commanded by Colonel Starkweather—and would go into camp at Milwaukee. We replied, expressing our approval of their course and wishing them success in crushing the rebellion and a safe return home.

In Civil War days, the Y. M. C. A. did not furnish, as it does today, comfort, entertainment, reading material, and other necessities and the soldiers were sometimes very lonely and resorted to many methods of entertainment, one of which interested the girls at home. One day several of the boys were together and one suggested that each should put into a hat the name of a girl he knew and that then each soldier should draw a name and write a letter to the bearer of it. My name was drawn and shortly afterward I received a very fine letter from a soldier of whom I had never heard, telling of the arrangement and asking a reply to the letter. I did not reply and when the war was over I asked my friend why he put my name in that hat and he said: "We were so lonesome we wanted to do something and when that suggestion was made, we at once adopted it. Why didn't you answer the letter?"

"Did the other girls answer?" I asked.

"None of them" he replied. "Theirs was not a wise selection of names."

Thus began our writing to the soldier boys, which continued for the next four years, and many events of interest we learned about in the letters which came to us from our soldier friends. The girls in those days were patriots and anxious to do all they could for the boys in the Army who were their friends and many of them wrote to a number and had to be very careful to put the letters in the right envelopes, for there were some instances of misplaced letters which caused sad terminations of former pleasant relationships. So the girls learned to be very careful.

Those boys were members of the Athenaen Literary Society in the University and when they went to war their society regarded them as heroes and wanted their pictures to hang on their walls. Since they had no uniforms at that time, they borrowed some in which to have their pictures taken; later they learned to their chagrin that the uniforms they had borrowed were officers' uniforms whereas they were privates. However, time soon corrected the error, for after their original three months' enlistment had expired they went back into the Army as officers in other regiments, after which their pictures in officers' uniforms were no longer out of place.

Here I must tell of an incident which happened twenty-five years after the war. E. G. Miller, one of the First Regiment boys and afterward until the end of the war captain in the Twentieth Regiment, lived in Waterloo, Iowa, and his son, Ned Miller, came to the University and lived in my home while there. One day he came home very much excited, saying that he had been to the rooms of the Athenaen Society, of which his father was a member in 1861, and tried to find the portraits of those boys about which his father had told him. After a vain search, the janitor showed him where those pictures had been placed by the later Athenaens—out on the rubbish pile. This revelation made him exceedingly angry.

In the early days of the war, many patriotic meetings were held and every effort was made to induce young men to enlist. They were urged and coaxed and persuaded and driven and ridiculed if they wouldn't go. Bounties were offered, cows and many other things besides, as well as good money, if the boys would only go—go and enlist, go at once. The "Star Spangled Banner" and "America" became as familiar to the young people of the Nation as their A, B, C's and we sang many songs from our patriotic songbook, *The Bugle Call*.

The women, too, were doing their part. Societies were organized for preparing articles for the Sanitary Commission and in every place the women met to scrape lint, roll bandages, make needlebooks, and knit socks and all the other necessary things for the soldiers. Marie Miner wrote me from Rockford Seminary that every Seminary girl spent all her spare time knitting. Nowhere could a girl be found who was not knitting away furiously on a blue sock for some soldier. I remember well one ride Mrs. W. H. Chandler and I took canvassing the town of Windsor for old linen and cotton and other supplies. We gathered the goods, but when we had almost finished, our horses ran away, and although we reached home in safety with the supplies, the fright which we had that day unfitted us for years for driving horses with any degree of pleasure.

All over the country, the work of enlistment went on and in the University the classes steadily decreased in numbers. By 1863, the regents began to fear that the University would soon be left with only the buildings and the faculty. So they decided if the young men were all going to war, they would admit the young women of the state to a Normal Department. It might help the girls and at the same time keep the faculty busy. Both objects were accomplished when the girls came in the spring of 1863. The newcomers were quite surprised, when they entered the University, to find that the men students who still remained felt humiliated over

the presence of girls in the University and that some of the professors, even, did not entirely approve of the new plan. Most of the faculty, however, and especially Professor Sterling, the acting president, Professor Allen, and Miss Moody of our Normal Department did everything in their power to make it pleasant for the girls, of whom I was one. The boys roomed in North Hall, the girls in South Hall. Although our paths crossed as we went to our chapel exercises and recitations in the north end of the main building and the boys went to theirs in the south end of the same building, they did not recognize our presence and we were just as oblivious of theirs. Not until February, 1864, after our first Castalian exhibition, did the young men and young women ever meet socially.

That evening we acted "The Great Rebellion" and invited the faculty and students to attend. They came. We had a Goddess of Liberty and each state was represented by one of our number. South Carolina seceded and other southern states followed. New York and Massachusetts and other northern states remonstrated and after much consultation, argument, and compulsion the seceding states all came back, the Union was preserved, and the Star Spangled Banner waved in triumph over a united nation. The Castalians thus accomplished in one evening what took the United States four years of time and a vast sacrifice of money and human life to do. That night Mrs. Sterling invited the girls of the Castalian Society and the senior and junior classes of young men in the University to come to her parlors for a social time. We went and had a pleasant time.

When, a few months later, the senior class (all but one) enlisted in the Fortieth Regiment, the principal of our Normal Department went as the captain of their company. The boys came up from Camp Randall and spent their last evening with the girls, and we gave them the needlebooks we had made and told them how glad we were they were

going, and hoped they would all return, none the worse for their hundred days' service to their country. I understand the boys and girls of Wisconsin have been on friendly terms from that day to this.

We had exciting times in the University that spring of 1864—so many of the boys beside the senior class enlisted and so many outside the University. One night at the supper-table Professor Allen said to me: "We have some new recruits from your town today."

When I asked, "Who?" he replied, "S. H. Sabin, Sylvester Raymond, James Swain, and Herbert Lewis."

"Oh," I said, "you've spoiled our choir. They all, except Sylvester Raymond, have been singing in our choir ever since the church was built."

Mr. Sabin was chosen first lieutenant of the company and was a very efficient and popular officer.

There were no commencement exercises at the University that year, as the senior class was in the Army. They, however, received their diplomas just the same.

It was that same year, 1864, that my brother's regiment, the Thirty-sixth, under command of Colonel Frank Haskell, was in Camp Randall for a short time and then went to the front. My brother was captain of Company B. I remember when we were watching the regiment file out of Camp Randall to take the cars how a man looking on said: "Pretty green troops, pretty green troops to send to the front." I can still recollect my feeling of indignation that he who was staying at home should criticize those going to fight for him.

Colonel Haskell had proved himself a brave officer before he became colonel of the Thirty-sixth and he was very ambitious for his regiment. They were quickly put into active service and the following letter, written by my brother, describes his first experience as a fighter.



Sunday, June 5-64

Gaines Farm. 8 miles from Richmond

FRIEND HERBERT,

Sabbath afternoon, and as I have some leisure, I will improve it by writing to you. I don't remember whether I have written before or not, but I wish to say you must write to me often, whether you hear from me or not. I am sitting on a haversack behind a breastwork writing on a crackerbox with the bullets whistling over my head containing the compliments of the Rebs who are lying about thirty rods in front of us. We came here day before yesterday. We were pressing up to the enemy's works, Colonel McRean commanding the brigade. He got detached from the command with a few men and was killed. The command then devolved upon Col. Haskell. He had just ordered the men to lie down, and was standing himself when he was shot through the head by a rebel sharpshooter. He fell unconscious and was carried to the rear, lived about an hour. Lieut. Atwell was wounded about the same time. A few minutes after Lieut. Lamberton, who was in command of Co. B, was placing some rails for a breastwork when he was shot dead. Col. Porter of the 8th New York was killed about the same time eighty rods on our left. I lost four men slightly wounded the same day but taken together the day was a play day to me compared with the 1st of June. On that day, we were at a place called Turner's Farm. About five O'clock four companies on the right of our regiment were detached and taken forward to charge the rebel works. We were deployed in single line. Were supported on the right by the 7th Michigan, an excellent regiment, and on the left by the 42nd. of New York. Maj. Hooper was in command of the line and I of our four companies, Captains Weeks, Lindly, Newton and Burwell of the companies respectively. At a certain signal we were to charge across an open field about fifty rods through soft sand and carry if possible the rebel works.

At the signal, our men and the 7th Mich. started. We were met with a perfect storm of balls. The New York regiment did not start at all, the Michigan retreated in a few minutes. Our men charged right across the field up to and some of them over the works. They were met by shot cannister and musketry and four rebs to our one. We gave the order to retreat, but the men moved on into the very

jaws of death—when they broke and every man took charge of himself. After I saw that it was hopeless, I made my way to the right where the woods were nearest. I would drop every time I thought they were going to fire the cannon and then rise and run a few rods. The first man I saw in the woods was Capt. Lindly, wounded; the next was Lieut. Weeks. Capt. Burwell was shot and I am afraid is lost. Lieut. Newton was lost. I went into the charge with sixty men and came out with twenty. It is needless to say every man and officer did his duty.

CLEMENT.

When the result of this charge was reported to Colonel Haskell, he said: "I was ashamed of those veteran regiments. It is a soldier's duty to obey orders. It isn't possible for them to understand the reason why. Your company did right in crossing that open field and should have been supported by the Michigan and New York regiments."

After Colonel Haskell's death and the wounding of Lieutenant Colonel Savage and Major Brown, my brother was in charge of the regiment, until in August he was wounded, losing his left arm. Major Hamilton also was wounded at the same time, a ball passing through his nose and lodging under his cheek-bone. They were wounded at Deep Bottom and were soon after sent to Armory Square Hospital in Washington, D. C.

Soon after this, I received the following letter:

Armory Square Hospital,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sister Sabra,

I came to the hospital on Monday and as I am in need of some nice little girl to wait on me I have concluded to send for you. I am very comfortably situated here and have every care that a wounded soldier needs. Gov. Randall, Adj. Gen. Gaylord, Mrs. Scidmore and quite a number of Wisconsin friends whom I was glad to see have called on me. I expect Major Grant, the paymaster here this afternoon to pay me. If he comes I will send you money to come with. If

not father will furnish you the money, and I will repay him. You may have noticed that I have employed an amanuensis as I am rather too weak to write myself, but the Doctors say my wound is doing well.

When you get to the depot take the horse cars to Seventh street, then to Armory Square Hospital where in Ward K you will find your brother. You will board with Mrs. Scidmore who keeps a boarding house for Wisconsin people on Massachusetts Ave. and 7th Street.

Yours,

CLEMENT.

The letter came just before noon and in the afternoon father brought me to Madison and I left for Washington that night. Before taking the train, I called on Mrs. David Atwood, who was a sister of Mrs. Scidmore with whom I was to board while in Washington, and she gave me a letter to Mrs. Scidmore. Soon after, I met Professor Read of the University, to whom I had recited Mental Philosophy and Political Economy the winter before, and he inquired about my brother. When I told him he had sent for me to come to him in Washington and I would go that night, he said: "But, Miss Warner, who goes with you?"

When I told him I was going alone, he seemed shocked. "Oh" he said, "I don't like to have you take this journey alone in these war times. There is no telling what may befall you." After thinking a moment, he added: "Now I want you to let me go and see the Governor and get a letter from him for you. It may be just what you will need in some emergency and I shall feel safer about you if I do it."

He soon returned with the letter, and armed with this and the one given me by Mrs. Atwood, I began my journey, which proved to be a very pleasant one. I reached Washington safe and sound and Mrs. Scidmore received me with open arms saying: "I know all about you. I have been to see your brother and am ready to receive you into my home and heart and be your mother while you are here."

Her kindness and that of her sister, Miss Sweeney, who was a clerk in the Treasury Department, I remember with gratitude.

After eating supper, two of the Wisconsin gentlemen at Mrs. Scidmore's went to the hospital with me and we found my brother very impatiently wondering why his sister didn't come. He said he had been looking for me for two hours. He knew just how long it would take to come from Madison to Washington and thought I was two hours late, which was in fact the case, an accident on the way having delayed the train just two hours.

I spent the morning with him every day and a part of the afternoon. Mrs. Scidmore frequently sent nice things for him and Major Hamilton to eat and I did many errands for them besides bringing them reading matter and reading to them. In the afternoons, after I came home from the hospital and Miss Sweeney was through with her day's work, we went to many places of interest in and around Washington. We went to Georgetown and Alexandria, where we went into the church which President Washington used to attend, and sat in his square box pew. In the cemetery by the church I saw for the first time the slabs of marble placed flat on the graves and almost large enough to cover them to mark the resting place of those lying beneath. One peculiar inscription told of the "beloved 9th wife who died in the arms of her disconsolate husband." Some miscreant had evidently changed a figure four to a figure nine, thinking, no doubt, if the loss of the fourth wife would make the husband disconsolate, the loss of five more would make him more so.

In the officers' ward where my brother was, the ward mistress was a Miss Lowell (a relative of James Russell Lowell) of Boston. All the ward mistresses seemed to be very efficient and very interesting women and some of them were very fine looking. There was one who passed through our ward every day when she went to dinner, who received

the undivided attention of every officer in the ward as she passed through. They began to examine their watches long before dinner time to see if it was time to get into position for they evidently meant to see her as long as possible.

Many friends of the officers came to sit with them during the day and others came to call and to visit. One day a very nice, motherly-looking woman came in and said she wanted to see all the officers who came from Wisconsin, and as she was introduced to each one she took his hand and said, "I am from Wisconsin and glad to meet you because you are a Wisconsin soldier." Then with tear-filled eyes she bade him "goodbye" and "kissed him for his mother." They received the attention in the spirit in which it was given and were very quiet as she passed along.

One day a wounded officer was brought into the ward who seemed to be enduring great suffering. He found a great deal of fault with the nurse and with his father and groaned continually. This continued for some time until it was noticed by everyone. At length he groaned a little worse than he had before, when the man on the next cot groaned just as he did, and the next and the next, until every one on that side of the ward had groaned. Then they commenced on the other side and my brother and Major Hamilton, when it came their turn, groaned just as the rest had done. "Why," I said to my brother, "What did you do that for? How could you be so cruel?"

He replied, "That, my little sister, is army discipline. Of course that man is in pain, but so is everyone in this ward. You don't suppose we could stand it if they all groaned like that, do you? No, a soldier must learn to endure without groaning. You will see that he can learn his lesson."

And so it turned out, for the sufferer groaned no more.

Many ladies used to visit the hospital and bring flowers and oranges and other things to the soldiers. Of course they were always grateful for these attentions, although they

didn't much need the oranges for almost everyone had a box under the head of his cot. One day a young lady came in and evidently thinking the captain who used to groan looked as if he needed sympathy more than any of the others, gave her offering to him. In a few days she came again and brought him something more and then again. When she went away this time, she forgot something and came back just in time to hear the officers bantering him about the attentions he was receiving, asking if it wouldn't be fair to divide, etc. She came directly to me and said: "I want to see you." When we were outside, she asked: "Do these officers make fun of me when I come in here?"

"O," I said, "they make fun of everything they can, of the nurses, the ward-mistresses, the doctors, each other, yes, and the visitors—you and me. But they mean no disrespect to any of us. They simply must do something to drive away the sadness and gloom of sickness and pain. They don't mean anything and we mustn't mind it."

But she didn't come any more, and so the men lost this source of amusement.

After three weeks in the hospital my brother and I came home, visiting in New York and Michigan on our way, and at Thanksgiving we had a house party for our soldier boys. Major Hamilton came out from Madison and Herbert Lewis, who had returned from the hundred days' service in the Fortieth and been elected clerk of the court, and his sister and her friend Eliza Noble (later my brother's wife) were also with us. One evening the boys gave a talk in the church about their experiences in the Army. We had a gay time over Thanksgiving and then Clement and Major Hamilton returned to their regiment and remained with it until the close of the war.

The war finally ended and when General Grant and General Lee were having their consultation over terms of surrender, my brother's regiment, as he told us, with many

others, was drawn up in line of battle facing Lee's army near the house where the conference was being held. When it was concluded, a sergeant came from the conference and brought word to our soldiers, which the Thirty-sixth Regiment was one of the first to receive: "Lee has surrendered. Pass the word down the line."

The word was passed down the line and instantly there was no longer a line of battle. The men threw down their guns, hugged each other, rolled on the ground, threw their caps in the air, shouted and sang, and made every demonstration possible to show their joy at the prospect of going home.

The job of conquering the South had taken much money and many lives, but the country believed it was a job worth doing and that it was well done—a good fight for a just cause.